

EMPLOYMENT MATTERS COMMITTEE

7 DECEMBER 2010

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE – POST RECOGNITION REVIEW

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Summary

This report details the results of the Investors in People post recognition review to attain Gold Status and the plans for the way forward incorporating information from the staff survey.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 It is within the committee's terms of reference to make recommendations on matters relating to employment, and it is requested that Members note the information outlined below.

2. Background

Investors in People

2.1 Medway Council has been recognised as an Investor in People since 1999 and this was the fifth review which has taken place since that time. Each of these subsequent reviews, against the Investors in People core 39 standards, has so far demonstrated that the council has sustained its commitment to develop the needs of its people and has continued to improve the processes that underpin Investors in People.

2.2 In 2009 Investors in People (IiP) introduced a more flexible approach to customise the standards to develop and stretch organisations. This new approach introduced bronze, silver and gold status awards. It was decided that to move the organisation forward it would aim for gold status and would be reviewed against 193 evidence requirements.

2.3 To reduce the cost of external assessment and to build internal expertise, twenty four staff were trained as internal reviewers to undertake the majority of the work.

2.4 The review took place between 20 September to 1 October 2010. 130 staff were selected at random in line with IiP guidelines and interviewed by the Internal Reviewers. With the managing assessor interviewing 14 senior and key managers.

- 2.5 Studies by the Cranfield Business school (Bourne, M., 2008) into the value of achieving IIP status identified:
- Those organisations that are liP recognised are more likely to have high levels of trust, commitment and cooperation among their employees.
 - The liP Standard has a positive impact on innovation. Those organisations that are liP recognised are more likely to have high levels of service innovation.
 - The liP Standard has a positive impact on the degree of achievement of organisation's strategic goals. Those companies that are liP recognised are more likely to meet their strategic objectives.
- 2.6 Internal reviewers' reports were collated and sent to the managing assessor, along with the evidence portfolio for his confidential report to be written. Gold status was confirmed after a quality assurance process by liP, which involved an independent panel convening to review the managing assessor's evidence.

Staff Survey

- 2.7 The council's staff survey is run every three years and was undertaken in April this year, using an electronic and hard copy survey format.
- 2.8 2678 staff were sent the survey and there was a 49% return, which is a huge improvement – an increase of over 100% on previous response rates. This was achieved through using Headlines, email reminders and visits to external sites with hard copies of the survey and a covering letter for managers explaining the benefits and the importance of completing the survey. .
- 2.9 liP review and the staff survey complement each other and reinforce the perception of staff that Medway Council is an employer of choice.

3. Advice and analysis

- 3.1 The collective results of the liP review and the staff survey are as follows:

3.2 Medway council vision and core values

- liP review provided evidence that people have a strong public service ethos and believe in the Council's core values.
- Supported by the staff survey results:
 - 98% of staff put the customer at the centre of everything they do
 - 94.8% believe they give value for money

3.3 Celebration of success

- liP review was able to give examples, in staff and managers' own words, of how we celebrate individual and team success:
 - "For my 65th birthday I took in lunch to recognise all the staff."
 - Emails/letters/cards from others, including top managers, the portfolio holder (councillor) etc
 - 'Award of the week' given out among managers in management team meetings – "a bit of fun".
 - People feel proud of what they build – when traffic problems are solved e.g. articulated lorries no longer tip-over because we

have built a safer roundabout – this all helps Medway to be a safer place to travel

- With many managers buying chocolate and cakes for staff for good work and to say thank you along with written praise
- Nominations for the Recognition awards

Supported by the staff survey results:

- 61.7% of staff preferring verbal praise and recognition
- 54.7% of staff preferring written praise and recognition
- 55.4% of staff preferring additional time off work.

3.4 Learning and development

- liP review confirms that there are a number of differing ways of learning in operation throughout the Council
 - Courses / Espresso shots / on-line learning
 - Sharing knowledge
 - Team meetings
 - Learning by mistakes enforced the no blame culture in some services
 - Team development events

It was also recognised that HR support is innovative and forward thinking; that there is a commitment to training apprentices and graduates plus work experience places are available to disadvantaged people.

There were some teams who were un-able to demonstrate they were involved in team development or that they had a discussion with their line manager after undertaking a development event.

- Supported by the staff survey:
 - 67.4% believe learning and development is open to everyone
 - 60.1% are aware of development opportunities available to them
 - 60.5% agree that the Council is committed to supporting employee development

3.5 Work life balance

- liP confirms how managers described how flexible working can increase staff motivation; build better relationships between them and their staff; increase retention and reduce absence rates. Staff were complimentary about the Council's commitment to ensure they have a good work-life balance. There was a feeling that work-life balance was part of the culture of the Council.
- Supported by the staff survey:
 - 79.7% are satisfied with the flexibility of working hours
 - 73.1% are aware of the flexi-time scheme
 - 55.3% have experienced flexi-time scheme

3.6 Management and leadership capabilities

- liP review confirms the quality of management and leadership in the Council is excellent and it was clear that the vast majority of people feel very well motivated and supported with a clear understanding of what they are expected to achieve. However, it is important to reinforce management capabilities and ensure that all managers are regularly reviewed against them.
- Staff survey results:
 - 77.1% have had a Personal Development Review, one to one or supervision in the last 12 months.

3.7 Evaluation

- liP review states that evaluation at individual and team level is arguably the most significant area for development in supporting the evidence requirements of the standard.
- Staff survey results:
 - 68.9% believe they can apply their new skills after carrying out learning and development activities
 - 67.2% believe development activities have helped them improve their performance.

3.8 Openness and Trust

There were some people who did not believe the council has a culture of openness and trust which is potentially a result of the current uncertainty caused by the economic climate and people's perception of the personal style of some managers.

3.9 Nature of HR Support

The HR function provides excellent support for learning and development, as well making a significant contribution in facilitating organisational change and development. It is important to make sure that the significance of this contribution is not lost and that HR support continues to be innovative and proactive in stimulating and supporting change and performance improvement against a background of potential organisational change, such as the development of self service resources and the development of other IT based resources such as i-share. The inevitable focus on reducing staff numbers will also raise the importance of supporting people in areas such as re-deployment.

3.10 Talent Management

The organisation is well aware of the fact that there are a number of talented people at all levels in the organisation. A talent management strategy is being developed and once in place will ensure this area of liP is met.

3.11 Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement

The external review team was impressed with the way that the council has moved forward over the last three years and the way in which we constantly challenge the way we work. It was clear from interviews that the council is also able to create a wide range of learning and development opportunities as well as being very proactive in the way in which we encourage people to take advantage of them. The main development action, which is required, is to

maintain the strong focus on the process of continuous improvement that exists, particularly in terms of continuing to benchmark its performance against other high performing organisations as well as learning from experiences.

4 Risk management

4.1 There are no risk implications arising from this report.

5. Consultation

5.1 All staff were invited to take part in the staff survey and the staff interviewed for liP were randomly selected across the organisation by job role, length of service, grade, age, gender, disability, ethnicity and contract type.

6. Financial and legal implications

6.1 There are no direct financial or legal implications arising from this report.

7. Recommendation

7.1 That Members note the content of this report and note the way forward:

- (i) The way forward - a staff engagement group has been set up to look at the staff survey results. They will also work with the results of liP where the areas overlap.
- (ii) The internal reviewers already meet on a regular basis to plan future reviews, identify improvement areas for services and to gain a greater understanding of the standards. They will be working on the areas that are not covered by the staff survey.
- (iii) An internal reviewer attends the staff engagement group to reduce duplication.

Background papers

There are no background papers for this report.

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